

**THE IMPACT OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND ACCESSIBILITY ON TOURISTS' SATISFACTION: THE MODERATING ROLE OF TOURISTS' AGE****Chhanda BISWAS\***Universiti Utara Malaysia, College of Law, Government and International Studies, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Environmental Management, 06010, Kedah, Malaysia, e-mail: [chhandabiswasuum@gmail.com](mailto:chhandabiswasuum@gmail.com)**Hamimi OMAR**Universiti Utara Malaysia, College of Law, Government and International Studies, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Environmental Management, 06010, Kedah, Malaysia, e-mail: [hamimi@uum.edu.my](mailto:hamimi@uum.edu.my)**Jasmine Zea Raziah Radha RASHID-RADHA**Universiti Utara Malaysia, College of Law, Government and International Studies, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Environmental Management, 06010, Kedah, Malaysia, e-mail: [jasmine@uum.edu.my](mailto:jasmine@uum.edu.my)

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**Abstract:** Age has frequently been recognized as one of the key attributes and indicators in creating an advertising system. In any case, it has been infrequently discovered the moderating effects of age on the links between attractions and accessibility as well as tourist satisfaction. Particularly, in the context of Bangladesh, this sort of study has not ever been considered. Hence, this study fulfils the gap by examining the moderating role of age in the relationship of these constructs. The questionnaire survey was directed for gathering data from international tourists in the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Bangladesh. The outcomes got from Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the SmartPLS v3 uncovered that age significantly moderated the relationship between attraction and tourist satisfaction as well as accessibility and tourist satisfaction.**Key words:** Tourist satisfaction, attractions, accessibility, marketing strategy, Bangladesh

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**INTRODUCTION**

The concept of tourist satisfaction is well documented both in the service management literature as well as the marketing literature. The service management literature suggests that service quality is an antecedent to tourist satisfaction because the higher service quality indicates the higher tourist satisfaction (Chand and Ashish, 2014). The marketing literature indicates that enhancing tourist satisfaction should be the primary function of a destination management organization. Therefore, measuring tourist satisfaction is a prerequisite for the development of a strategy leading to a destination's enhanced attractiveness and its competitive positioning (Nasir et al., 2020). Thus, Chin et al. (2018) explained that the destination's enhanced attractiveness and competitive positioning depends on good accessibility quality. Subsequently, this attractiveness and competitiveness enhance tourists' satisfaction. In addition, Kahtani et al. (2011) established in their study that accessibility is evaluated not only from a transportation or geographic proximity perspective but also from the perspective of available quality functions and facilities at tourist attractions.

Many authors explained some issues regarding tourist satisfaction. These include many factors influencing tourists' satisfaction (Roy et al., 2017; Khuong and Nguyen, 2017; Jayasinghe et al., 2015); accessibility and attractions as the determinant for destination competitiveness and attractiveness that in turn, contribute to tourist satisfaction (Nasir et al., 2020; Hossain and Islam, 2019); the influence of service quality on satisfaction (Mazumder and Hasan, 2014; Ukwai et al., 2012; Latiff and Imm, 2015); satisfaction and dissatisfaction with destination attributes (Vareiro et al., 2017; Udurawana, 2015). Therefore, several earlier studies showed socio-demographic factors' effects in measuring tourist satisfaction (Rafael and Almeida, 2017; Ma et al., 2018). Salim and Mohamed (2014) investigated the influence of tourists' age on their satisfaction level. Similarly, Ghanbri et al. (2019) showed that there is a positive relationship between socio-demographic factors and tourist satisfaction levels in tourism products. Conversely, several authors found a negative influence of socio-demographic factors and satisfaction levels (Ma et al., 2018). On the other side, several studies found the indirect effects of socio-demographic factors in measuring satisfaction (Huang, 2014; Sereetrakul, 2012). But very few literatures specifically explored the moderating impact of tourist age for identifying the relationship between attractions and accessibility as well as tourist satisfaction (Assaker et al., 2015; Chi, 2011). The current study addresses this knowledge gap by providing discussions and justifications on how tourist age moderates the link between IV (accessibility and attraction) and DV (tourist satisfaction).

**LITERATURE REVIEW****Tourist Satisfaction**

According to Ghanbri et al. (2019), satisfaction can be defined as an evaluation of the surprise inherent from a product acquisition as well as consumption experience. Briefly, satisfaction means the psychological state of an individual resulting when the emotions surrounding the expectations are related to the consumers' prior feelings about the consumption experience (Hermawan et al., 2019; Tilaki et al., 2017). Similarly, tourist satisfaction can be defined that it is the state of psychological preferences and pleasure towards tourism products. Tourism products consist of six components that include attractions (natural, man-made, artificial, purpose-built, heritage, special events), accessibility (entire transportation system comprising routes, terminals, and vehicles), amenities (accommodation and catering facilities,

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retailing, other tourists service), activities (all activities available at the destination and what consumers will do during their visits), ancillary services (services used by tourists such as banks, telecommunication, post, newsagent, hospital) and available packages (pre-arranged packages by intermediaries and principals) (Mohamad et al., 2012; Eichhorn and Buhalis, 2017).

Previous studies mentioned many factors that influence tourist satisfaction (Nasir et al., 2020; Pestana et al., 2019; Hermawan et al., 2019; Ghanbri et al., 2019; Reyes et al., 2019; Chuchu, 2020). Shahrivar (2012) highlighted in his study some major factors that are considered as the destination attributes and significantly influence tourists' satisfaction involving natural factors, cultural factors, shopping, accessibility, infrastructure, reception, services, cost, and price. Moreover, Jeong and Kim, (2019); Chi and Qu, (2008); Lu et al. (2020) showed the relationship among destination image, tourist attributes and overall satisfaction through examining the theoretical and empirical evidence and focused tourist attributes consisting of travel environment, natural attractions, environment and events, historic attractions, infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, outdoor activities, price, and value. The study of Suanmali (2014) further explained the component of the tourism products consisting of attractions, accessibility, environment, and hospitality that are used as indicators for measuring tourists' satisfaction. Kahtani et al. (2011) argued and focused on accessibility as well as attractions. Because accessibility measures are found not only from a transportation or geographic proximity perspective but also from the perspective of available quality functions and facilities at tourist attractions (Kahtani et al., 2011). Therefore, tourist attractions are required for making destination attractiveness so that many tourists can be attracted (Nadalipour et al., 2019). For these reasons, previous literature on the effects of attractions and accessibility on tourist satisfaction is discussed in the following sections.

### Attraction

An attraction refers to a place or anything that appeals to tourists to visit any destination (Suanmali, 2014). Tourist attractions include natural attractions, cultural attractions, and recreation and activities. Lascu et al. (2018) described attractions as the determinant of the destination image that affects tourist satisfaction. These attractions include natural attractions such as scenic mountain and valleys, scenery and natural attractions, gardens and springs, scenic drive, parks, lakes, rivers, wildlife, caves, and underground formations. Another form of attraction is entertainment and events, which include shows, exhibitions, cultural events and festivals, western musicals and nightlife and entertainment; as well as historic attractions such as history, heritage, and vintage buildings (Rajesh, 2014).

Tourist attractions are found to be the core determinants of attractiveness and tourism would not exist without it (Haneef et al., 2019). Tourist attractions are regarded as an essential weapon and competitive advantage for any tourist destination (Nahar et al., 2015). In addition, Manhas et al. (2016) also stated that tourist attractions contribute to the development of the tourist destination as well as have beneficial effects on the overall economic development of any country. Attractions are also important attributes of tourism and hospitality (Handayani, 2016).

Kirom and Putra (2018) developed a research model showing the effects of tourism attractions on tourist satisfaction. Their study showed that cultural attractions, promotion, uniqueness, hospitality, and cost for creating a tourist attraction were considered for measuring their level of satisfaction (Kirom and Putra, 2018). Similarly, Hassan and Shahnewaz (2014) added that attractions and relaxation facilities are important factors for identifying tourist satisfaction. Apart from these, the study findings of Philemon (2015) over-emphasized the tourist attractions for assessing the tourists' perception and satisfaction. Even, Sereetrakul (2012) highlighted attractions as an important component of tourists' satisfaction towards the performance of the Bangkok tourism industry. Castro et al. (2017) explained that boosting the attractions and tourism activities generates comparative and competitive advantages to promote market opportunities and impel the tourist with unique experiences. Ultimately, tourists' satisfaction can be possible because tourist attractions are regarded as an important determinant claimed by Sereetrakul (2012); Castro et al. (2017); Vengesai and Mavondo (2009); Naidoo et al. (2011); Kirom and Putra (2018); Rajesh (2013). Hence, the following hypothesis can be proposed to test the relationship between attraction and tourist satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1: Attraction will positively affect tourist satisfaction.

### Accessibility

Accessibility is defined as the ability to provide tourists' access to a tourist destination including traveling throughout the destination (Suanmali, 2014). But accessibility does not mean only the transport part, also includes access to the tourists' needed information. Thus, Eichhorn and Buhalis (2017) defined accessibility involving transportation along with all the needed information for tourists. Ghose and Johann (2018) defined the concept of accessibility as easy-to-reach desired goods, services, activities, and destinations by the availability, affordability, and convenience of transport facilities, information, or geographic distribution of activities and destinations. Handayani (2016) illustrated accessibility as tourism and hospitality attributes. On the other side, Rajesh (2013) explained accessibility as the attributes of the destination image that affects tourist satisfaction. The development of the conceptual framework indicated that tourists' satisfaction is directly affected by accessibility.

Castro et al. (2017) highlighted tourist accessibility as the most important requirement when tourists plan their trip. Because tourists' needed information allows them to know about safe activities and sites. Furthermore, when they already make plans their trip with truthful and timely information, they become prepared to approach the destination learning about entertainment, leisure activities, restaurants, and hotels. Hence, the study findings of Castro et al. (2017) found that accessibility is an important indicator identified as fundamental for the measurement of tourist satisfaction. Similarly, Ngoc and Trinh (2015) hypothesized that accessibility affects tourist satisfaction.

Sereetrakul (2012) studied the influence of nationality on tourist satisfaction towards the performance of the Bangkok tourism industry. The study identified some factors that directly affect tourist satisfaction including accessibility (Sereetrakul, 2012). In addition, Seyidov and Adomaitienė (2016) claimed accessibility as the attribute of a tourism destination. The study explained that certain attributes consisting of attractions, amenities, accessibility, image, price, and human resources make tourism destination appropriate and available for tourists. Consequently, tourist satisfaction can be possible with these important attributes (Seyidov and Adomaitienė, 2016). Thus, accessibility is regarded as an important component for satisfying tourists (Ngoc and Trinh, 2015; Suanmali, 2014; Rajesh, 2013; Castro et al. 2017; Sereetrakul, 2012). Hence, the following hypothesis can be proposed to test the relationship between accessibility and tourist satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: Accessibility will positively affect tourist satisfaction.

### Studies Relating to Tourists' Age

It can be stated that a market is made from subgroups of individuals and that every subgroup has needs and expectations (Pakdil and Kurtuluşoğlu, 2018). The variety of demands and needs of tourists is probably going to bring about an enormous assorted variety of tourist behaviour. Along these lines, destination management organisations need to build up a superior comprehension of the gatherings of tourists to oblige their prerequisites; and market division empowers them to recognize customers with comparative needs or qualities (Kaciak, 2011). Customer segmentation is a successful marketing procedure that can bring about increasingly proficient and compelling utilization of

advertising including other promotional strategies. One of the most widely recognized division rules is socio-demographics. This investigation inspected coordinated travellers' sections for their homogeneity, or absence of it, in developing holiday destination tourist satisfaction based on tourist age (Chi, 2011). Age-based research has gotten expanding consideration in tourism and hospitality literature. Most age-based investigations have concentrated concerning the sub-division, motivation, limitations, and behaviour of the senior market. Some considered the impacts old enough on travellers' choices. For instance, Omar et al. (2015) exact investigation reasoned that age did not influence tourists' inclination for a specific kind of lodging for delight travel. Nonetheless, others contended that tourist's age was probably going to fundamentally impact on behaviour pattern and satisfaction (Assaker et al., 2015). However, this review of the literature indicates that there may have, additionally, the indirect effects of tourist age in measuring their satisfaction level (Assaker et al., 2015; Chi, 2011). Although it was found a few studies which showed the moderating effect of tourists' age on the influence of accessibility and attraction on examining tourist satisfaction. Hence, the following hypotheses can be proposed:

Hypothesis 3a: Tourist age will moderate the relationship between tourist attraction and satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3b: Tourist age will moderate the relationship between tourist accessibility and satisfaction.

### Conceptual Framework

Based on the above discussions that have been found from the reviewing of the previous literature, two significant determinants can be considered. Hence, this paper suggests attractions and accessibility are the two crucial antecedents of measuring tourist satisfaction. Although many authors previously identified many other factors influencing tourists' satisfaction, tourists give priority to accessibility from their decision-making phase (Seyidov and Adomaitienė, 2016). For this reason, they collect information that allows them to know about safe activities and destinations (Castro et al., 2017). Then, they proceed with their trip plan having information about attractions and entertainment, leisure activities, hotel, and restaurants. Hence, attractions and accessibility are regarded as a significant determinant to measure tourists' satisfaction despite identifying many other factors. In addition, it is crucial to determine the tourist age effect on the link between these two factors and satisfaction levels. Therefore, no studies have been found in the context of developing countries including Bangladesh. Consequently, the present paper proposes the following conceptual framework (Figure 1) for further analysis after reviewing numerous recent previous literatures.

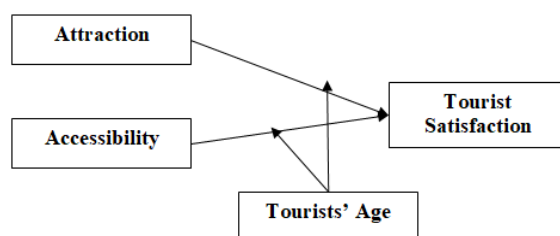


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire survey was conducted for collecting primary data from international tourists in Bangladesh. Of the 500 questionnaires, 387 questionnaires were used for analysis via SmartPLS v3. The data collection procedure was performed at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Bangladesh so that international tourists can be found easily. The total data collection period was from January to March 2020. For conducting this study, five measurement items for attractions were adapted from the studies of Truong and Foster (2006); Chan (2016); Sukiman et al. (2013); another six items were used for accessibility which was adapted from the studies of Truong and Foster (2006); Omar et al. (2015). Moreover, the studies conducted by Yao (2013); Biodun (2014); Aliman et al. (2016) were adapted for selecting measurement items of tourist satisfaction. Therefore, for performing the data analysis process, Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Partial Linear Square of Structural Equation Modelling were utilized.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

As shown in Table 1, 62.0% of respondents were male and 38.0% were female respondents. Moreover, it was found that most of the respondents were 50 years old and above which indicates 30%. Therefore, 9% of respondents were 17-20 years old, 14.70% of respondents were 21-29%, 25.3% were 30-39 years old and 20.90% were 40-49 years old tourists. In the case of the visiting purposes, 10.6% of respondents were for vacation, 27.4% were for religious purposes, 24.3% international tourists were visiting friends and family, 17.1% and 12.4% were for the business and medical purposes and 7.8% were for medical purposes. The mean values (3.7354 and 4.1318) of the independent variables indicate that international tourists were happy in tourist attractions and accessibility in Bangladesh. Moreover, the mean score of tourist satisfaction is 3.6853 indicating that international tourists were satisfied in attractions and accessibility in Bangladesh.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Demographic Factors

| No | Characteristics   | Variable                       | N   | %    |
|----|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----|------|
| 1  | Gender            | Male                           | 240 | 62.0 |
|    |                   | Female                         | 147 | 38.0 |
| 2  | Age               | 17-20 years old                | 35  | 9.0  |
|    |                   | 21-29 years old                | 57  | 14.7 |
|    |                   | 30-39 years old                | 98  | 25.3 |
|    |                   | 40-49 years old                | 81  | 20.9 |
|    |                   | 50 years old and above         | 116 | 30.0 |
|    |                   |                                |     |      |
| 3  | Visiting Purposes | Vacation                       | 41  | 10.6 |
|    |                   | Religion                       | 106 | 27.4 |
|    |                   | Visiting Friends and Relatives | 94  | 24.3 |
|    |                   | Business                       | 66  | 17.1 |
|    |                   | Education                      | 48  | 12.4 |
|    |                   | Medical                        | 30  | 7.8  |
|    |                   | System                         | 2   | 0.5  |

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Constructs

| No | Variables            | Items | Mean   | SD      | Alpha |
|----|----------------------|-------|--------|---------|-------|
| 1  | Attraction           | 5     | 3.7354 | 0.90058 | 0.820 |
| 2  | Accessibility        | 6     | 4.1318 | 0.70589 | 0.869 |
| 3  | Tourist Satisfaction | 5     | 3.6853 | 0.98468 | 0.854 |

### Assessment of the Measurement Model

The measurement model of the study shows that the outer loadings are suitable to fit into the variable. Outer loadings of the study for attraction are 0.819, 0.764, 0.711, 0.806, and 0.705 respectively. For accessibility are 0.804, 0.758, 0.662, 0.842, 0.766, and 0.812 respectively. Conversely, loadings for tourist satisfaction are 0.750, 0.722, 0.809, 0.846, and 0.840.

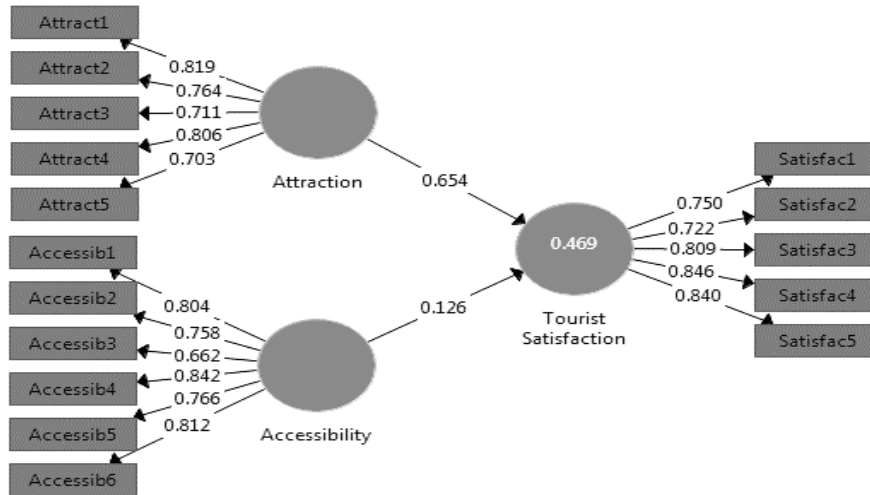


Figure 2. Diagram of the Measurement Model

Table 3 shows the Cronbach's Alpha scores for latent constructs (0.869, 0.820, 0.854), which are above 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951). The results represent enough internal consistency of the measurement items. AVE scores (0.602, 0.581, and 0.632) for the constructs are above 0.5 which means an appropriate measurement model (Assaker et al., 2015).

Table 3. Result of measurement model for the study

| Latent variables     | Cronbach's Alpha | Rho_A | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|----------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Accessibility        | 0.869            | 0.886 | 0.900                 | 0.602                            |
| Attraction           | 0.820            | 0.835 | 0.873                 | 0.581                            |
| Tourist Satisfaction | 0.854            | 0.863 | 0.895                 | 0.632                            |

### Assessment of the Structural Model

The diagram of the structural model (Figure 3) shows higher T-values which indicate enough efficiency in the variables (Ringle et al., 2015). Tourist satisfaction is used as an exogenous factor. Therefore, the age of the tourists was found as an exogenous construct. The effect of the independent variable (attraction and accessibility) to the dependent variable (tourist satisfaction) is positively significant. Furthermore, the moderating effect of age significantly affects the relationships between attraction, accessibility, and tourist satisfaction.

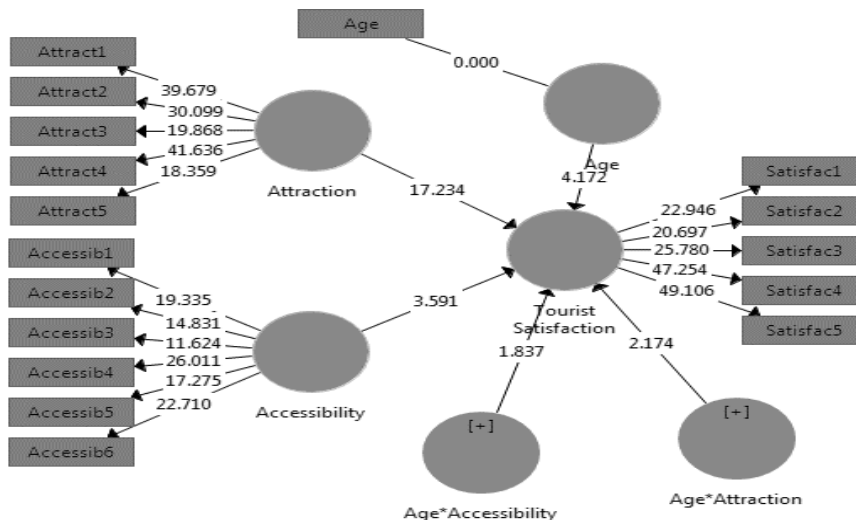


Figure 3. Diagram of the Structural Model

The results are supported because statistically significant relationships are found between independent, moderating, and dependent variables. The direct influence of IV towards DV are representing a significant and positive relationship as accessibility (P value= 0.000) and

attraction (P value= 0.000) which demonstrates a fitted structural model in this study. Moreover, the moderating effect of age shows that there is a positive relationship between age and satisfaction (P= 0.000); there is a moderating effect on the relationship between accessibility (P value= 0.066) and satisfaction as well as attraction and satisfaction (P value= 0.030).

Table 4. Results of Structural Model

| SL No. | Relationships                             | Direct/Indirect Effect | T Statistics | P Value  | Supported |
|--------|---|------------------------|--------------|----------|-----------|
| 1.     | Accessibility -> Tourist Satisfaction     | 0.048                  | 3.591        | 0.000*** | Yes       |
| 2.     | Age -> Tourist Satisfaction               | 0.285                  | 4.172        | 0.000*** | Yes       |
| 3.     | Age*Accessibility -> Tourist Satisfaction | 0.024                  | 1.837        | 0.066*   | Yes       |
| 4.     | Age*Attraction -> Tourist Satisfaction    | 0.029                  | 2.174        | 0.030**  | Yes       |
| 5.     | Attraction -> Tourist Satisfaction        | 0.038                  | 17.234       | 0.000*** | Yes       |

Note:  $p \leq 0.01$ \*\*\*;  $p \leq 0.05$ \*\*;  $p \leq 0.10$ \*

## DISCUSSION

Achieving tourist satisfaction is the main objective of all destination management organizations. However, not all organizations are fully aware of the different factors that affect satisfaction levels. Tourist satisfaction needs to be prioritised in the competitive business world. For this reason, Nasir et al. (2020) stated that the role of satisfaction is undeniable because it is essential to make business profitability. Moreover, identifying the factors that can fulfil tourist satisfaction especially in the tourism industry, helps to make a successful destination marketing programme.

## CONCLUSION

The present study examined the tourists' age effect on the relationships between accessibility and attraction as well as satisfaction. The results indicate that attraction has a positive and significant relationship with tourist satisfaction which is supported by many relevant studies including Suanmali (2014); Sukiman et al. (2013); Chi and Qu (2008); Hui et al. (2007). Therefore, it is found that accessibility has a positive and significant relationship with tourist satisfaction which is supported by several studies in different contexts including Jayaprakash and Mythili (2017); Ozturk and Gogtas (2016); Vareiro et al. (2017). Although, little studies earlier identified the tourist age effect and this gap has been fulfilled by this present study. Ultimately, the outcome shows that there is a moderating effect of age on the relationship between accessibility and satisfaction which is supported by several relevant studies including Assaker et al. (2015); Chi (2011). Moreover, the results interestingly show that there is a moderating effect of age on the relationship between attraction and satisfaction which is supported by several relevant studies including (Zhou, 2005; Salim and Mohamed, 2014). The present study consequently concludes that attractions and accessibility have a significant impact on tourists' satisfaction. Apart from these, tourists' age has a moderating effect on the link between IV (accessibility and attraction) and DV (tourist satisfaction).

## Theoretical Implication

The study contributes to the tourist satisfaction literature by explaining the impact of attraction and accessibility. Principally, the current study adds contribution to the existing literature by clarifying the tourists' age effects on the relationships between attractions, accessibility, and satisfaction. prior literature revealed in general that attractions and accessibility are the most widely used factors in the effort to create tourist's satisfaction. However, from these factors, accessibility for tourists is considered as an essential component of successful tourist destination development. Hence, Currie and Falconer (2014) indicated that transport plays an important role in the successful creation and development of new as well as the healthy growth of existing tourist destinations. Therefore, the provision of suitable transport and required information for tourists can transform dead centres of tourist interest into active and prosperous places attracting a lot of tourists (Virkar and Mallya, 2018). As for tourist attractions, they are the main feature of tourism product that triggers someone or group of people to visit any destination (Kruczek and Szromek, 2011). Apart from this, the marketing concept emphasizes the tourist attractions so that many more tourists can be attracted. Hence, Kirom and Putra (2018) observed some attractions variables involving promotion, culture, uniqueness, cost, and hospitality to comprehend tourists' satisfaction. But after review, it has been found that age as a moderating effect for analysing the relationships between attractions and accessibility with tourist satisfaction is rarely studied. Consequently, the findings of the study can provide insights into the investigation on tourist satisfaction in the context of Bangladesh by adding effects of tourist age on explaining the links between accessibility and attraction.

## Managerial Implication

The study has several managerial implications. First, the study can assist destination organisations' managers through a better understanding of tourist age effects on tourist satisfaction so that they can realize the age effects in the context of destination marketing. Second, tourism managers may understand the role of attractions and accessibility for identifying tourist satisfaction. Third, by understanding the current scenario of tourist satisfaction level in Bangladesh, tourism professionals can take initiatives for improving satisfaction levels.

## Limitations and Future Directions

Although the study has several contributions to the tourism industry as well as in the existing literature, it has some limitations. The study has been conducted based on the two factors involving accessibility and attraction. It can be further conducted by analysing other destination attributes including accommodation, amenities, activities, and safety. It is recommended that tourists' satisfaction levels be investigated based on nationality, gender, and income of international tourists. Furthermore, data can be collected to identify tourists' intentions to revisit and recommend to others.

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